

TECH BY JONNY LANGSTON

BAGGER BLASTER

An easy way to upgrade your bike's sound system

IF YOU HAVEN'T MOVED ON TO AN IPOD OR MP3 personal music system yet, you're not alone. (You may be a bit behind the times, but that's another story altogether; for now, we'll just call you "old-school.") Many old-school tourers are still married to the quadraphonic delights found in a good old car stereo system mounted in their fairings and seatbacks. Now, anyone who runs a full dresser knows that hearing an external stereo over the rush of the air and the roar of the engine while cruising down the highway at 65 mph — and, of course, wearing a full helmet — can be a work of art in itself. So, for most, the solution is to simply "Turn it up, dude!"

The problem with this approach is that the volume has to be cranked up so high that the small speakers usually associated with motorcycle stereo systems can be "blown out." This means that the small paper cone that reverberates inside the speaker has been shaken, rattled, and rolled to the point where it tears or punctures, resulting in distortion. Distortion is when the radio/stereo sounds like it's on a station that's not fully tuned in. So if the music coming out

of your speakers sounds like it's being played through a piece of tissue wrapped around a comb, chances are you've got a blown speaker, old-timer.

As you may remember, last month we had the guys at NewRoc Harley-Davidson in New Rochelle, New York, fix the fuel gauge sending unit on Bossman Buzz's 2000 Ultra Classic. Once that was done, we decided it was also time to upgrade his stereo, since it was apparent that the bike's speakers were hurting. The easy fix was to install a new set of four J&M speakers to complement his existing H-D sound system. We used J&M's high performance rear speakers for 1998 and later Ultra Classics (#HCUR-98/\$99.99) and high performance fairing speakers (#HCUS-98/\$99.99). We also popped in a new J&M microphone (#HMHU-98/\$69.99) for the bike's CB radio. These quality components will definitely give the boss better tunes as he cruises to work.

Though this is a quick and easy project, as with all things H-D, there are a few facts you should know before attempting it yourself. For starters, speakers are fragile! Many of the components (frames, grates) are made of lightweight plastic or

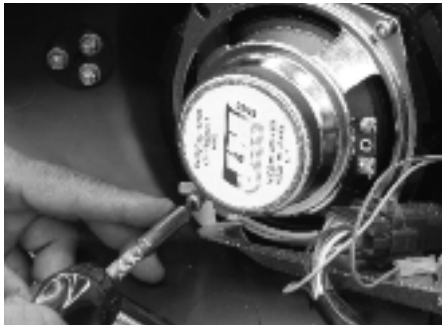
cloth, so don't force them into place or drop them. Also, any time you're handling speakers, take care not to puncture or tear the



1 We begin with Buzz's Ultra Classic, already on the lift, with the fairing off. The rear and fairing speakers have been removed by the techs at NewRoc H-D.



2 Our man "Harley Charlie" carefully inserts the new right speaker into the stock speaker frame so that the terminals are on the inside of the frame mount, pointing toward the headlight. The speaker should snap snugly into the plastic frame.



3 Using a Torx T25 driver, Charlie bolts the speaker assembly onto the back of the fairing. The thicker side of the wedge-shaped frame mount goes on the bottom.



4 The speaker wires are then attached to the terminals. If a wire lead doesn't want to attach to a terminal, don't force it! Most speakers use differently sized wire connectors, so they only hook up one way.



5 Repeat the procedure for the opposite-side speaker. Remember that, for fitment's sake, the leads should point inward, toward the headlight.



6 Moving on to the rear speakers, there is no removable mounting frame for the rear speakers, so Charlie's first step is to connect the wire leads to the terminals on the back of the speaker.



7 Charlie then places the speaker into the hole, with the terminals pointed inward, toward the center of the bike. Then he moves a grill into place over the speaker and lines up the holes.



8 Using a T10 Torx drive, Charlie screws one Torx bolt into each corner of the speaker. There are four stock bolts, one for each side of the rear speakers, and all are the same length.



9 Charlie then repeats the steps he did for the other rear speaker.



10 For the Ultra Classic, the new microphone is simply plugged into the connector on the side of the tank dash. A no-brainer, to be sure, but definitely an upgrade.

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11 Charlie plugs in the headlight before reattaching the fairing.



12 The windshield can now be moved into place and reattached using the three stock bolts along the top of the fairing and a T27 Torx drive. AIM

paper cone; otherwise, your brand-new speakers will sound as bad as the old blown ones.

Double-check to ensure that you're putting the right speaker into the right hole. Often, all four speakers are the exact same size and shape, so mind your R's and L's, and watch your F's and R's, if applicable. Also, when bolting the speaker assembly onto the back of the fairing, the thicker side of the wedge-shaped frame mount goes on the bottom. Be sure to keep the speaker pointing straight at the rider. This means that the lower Torx bolt will be slightly longer than the upper one and should go through the silver fairing stabilization bracket and into the hole on the mounting frame. (Note: On most Harleys, there are only two bolts for the fairing speakers, so they should be mounted diagonally from one another, lower bolt outside, upper bolt in.)

Finally, it's always a good idea to clean the speaker grates of loose dirt and particles, and you should always test any new sound system before reassembling the fairing. Makes sense, right?

SOURCES

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